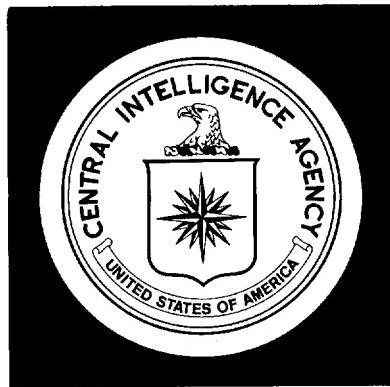


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CAMBODIA: Insurgent leaders contact the government.

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*CAMBODIA: THE GOVERNMENT REPORTEDLY HAS MADE CONTACT WITH A KEY KHMER INSURGENT LEADER.

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[REDACTED] FIRST MINISTER HANG THUN HAK HAS TOLD AMBASSADOR SWANK THAT HE HAS OBTAINED SEVERAL LETTERS RECENTLY--VIA AN INTERMEDIARY--FROM SIHANOUK'S IN-COUNTRY "MINISTER OF INTERIOR" HOU YOUN. ALTHOUGH HAK DID NOT DISCLOSE THE SPECIFIC CONTENT OF THESE LETTERS, HE CLAIMS THAT HOU YOUN IS OPPOSED TO A COMMUNIST SYSTEM FOR CAMBODIA AND ANXIOUS TO STOP THE FIGHTING, PROVIDED THE GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATES ITS SINCERITY BY NAMING TRUSTWORTHY NEGOTIATORS. HOU YOUN LEFT THE IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, THAT PRO-SIHANOUK AND PRO-HANOI ELEMENTS OF THE INSURGENCY DID NOT SHARE HIS INTEREST IN NEGOTIATIONS AND SUPPORT A PROLONGED CONFLICT.

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[REDACTED] IN A RATHER CONFUSED REPORT ON TWO MEETINGS WITH HOU YOUN IN AN INSURGENT-CONTROLLED AREA IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, THE INTERMEDIARY TOLD [REDACTED] HOU YOUN HAD INSISTED THAT ANY NEGOTIATIONS WILL HAVE TO BE ARRANGED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF WASHINGTON, PEKING, AND MOSCOW AND BE HELD IN A NEUTRAL THIRD COUNTRY. OF THE THREE POWERS, HOU YOUN APPARENTLY INDICATED THAT HE DISTRUSTS THE CHINESE BUT IS MORE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION.

THE INTERMEDIARY ALSO CLAIMED THAT THE TWO OTHER OSTENSIBLE LEADERS OF THE KHMER INSURGENCY, "DEFENSE MINISTER" KHIEN SAMPHAN AND "INFORMATION MINISTER" HU NIM, WERE PRESENT AT THE FIRST CONTACT, BUT THAT HOU YOUN DOMINATED THE MEETING AND WAS THE ONLY "MINISTER" PRESENT AT THE SECOND CONTACT. IF THE INTERMEDIARY IS INDEED COMPETENT TO RECOGNIZE THE THREE INSURGENT LEADERS, THIS WOULD BE THE MOST TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF THEIR ACTUAL EXISTENCE SINCE THEY DISAPPEARED FROM PHNOM PENH IN 1967.

(continued)

THE FRAGMENTARY NATURE OF THE ACCOUNTS BY BOTH HAK AND THE INTERMEDIARY MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO GIVE THEM COMPLETE CREDENCE. EVEN IF SUBSTANTIALLY CORRECT, THE STORIES SERVE TO underscore THE FACT THAT POLITICAL FACTIONALISM WITHIN INSURGENT RANKS IS CERTAIN TO IMPEDE ANY QUICK OR EASY SETTLEMENT OF THE CAMBODIAN PROBLEM. THE ACCOUNTS DO LITTLE TO DISPEL THE CONFUSION THAT SURROUNDS THE QUESTION OF WHO REALLY LEADS THE INSURGENCY AND WHERE THE LOYALTIES OF THOSE LEADERS LIE. IF LON NOL ALLOWS HAK TO KEEP THIS CHANNEL OPEN, SUBSEQUENT CONTACTS MAY SHED MORE LIGHT ON ALL THESE MATTERS.

*Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense.

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